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Q&A With Anita Hill;
One-on-one with the people behind the big stories

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Q: Do you mind that your name is synonymous with sexual harassment in the workplace?

A: It would only bother me if I didn't think when you think of me you think of us moving forward and starting to address it.

How will the recession affect sexual harassment?

A: From what I'm reading, (it) has potential for increasing these kinds of incidents because of the stresses that are on people in the workplace.

That's just an added stress that will only compound these issues that are going on anyway.

Q: Have things gotten better for women in the workplace since your testimony in 1991?

A: I'll tell you what has gotten better, (but) I don't think the problem has been eliminated. I think the public understanding of sexual harassment has been improved because we've had a public conversation. It's no longer a secret. It's no longer something they keep to themselves.

Q: What's different?

A: In the past, people thought it was a . . . white, middle-class woman's problem. Now we know that it's women who are in industry, production, finance, every industry. This is not just a problem of the boss chasing the secretary around the desk. This covers all different working women.

Q: What are the costs of sexual harassment?

A: The immediate one is economic. People lose jobs, change jobs, lose careers. There are physical costs. People who are sexually harassed tend to report more stress-related physical illnesses, anything from heart conditions to high blood pressure. Finally, there's the psychological cost. There's a lack of faith. When a person goes into a workplace, they are prepared to do the job, they're equipped to do the job, they're anxious to do the job, and instead this kind of impediment is put up that has nothing to do with the quality of their work.